

Michael F. Easley
Governor



State of North Carolina
Office of the Governor

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GOV. EASLEY RACES TO URGE SUPPORT FOR N.C. NATIONAL GUARD FAMILIES
Drives No. 25 National Guard/GMAC 'American Heroes' Car Before NASCAR NEXTEL All-Star Challenge

RALEIGH – Gov. Mike Easley will take the wheel of Casey Mears' No. 25 National Guard/GMAC "American Heroes" Car **Saturday (May 19)** to raise money for the North Carolina National Guard Family Readiness Program. The Governor, who will race a few laps around the track prior to the start of the NASCAR NEXTEL All-Star Challenge at Lowe's Motor Speedway in Concord, has already received numerous pledges for the program from private donors.

"The men and women in the North Carolina National Guard make significant sacrifices being overseas serving our country," said Easley. "Their families feel their sacrifice and our National Guard Family Readiness Program helps out with such things as car repairs, late mortgage payments, or things that families with an unexpected drop in income would experience. I am asking every citizen and business to join in giving a little bit back during race week."

Major contributions have already been pledged by the N.C. Bankers Association, Progress Energy, Speedway Motorsports and Hendrick Motorsports.

Rick Hendrick, owner of Hendrick Motorsports, who has made a pledge to the Guard, said: "We certainly encourage the entire NASCAR community to support our National Guard and we hope the great people of North Carolina will do the same."

Humpy Wheeler, president and general manager of Lowe's Motor Speedway, said: "Governor Easley is the world's fastest Governor and Saturday he will prove it on the track and raise awareness for a very worthy program to support our National Guard."

The North Carolina National Guard Family Readiness Program assists members of the National Guard and their families by providing programs, comprehensive information and referral services on a variety of family-related programs and services, particularly when guard families face the stress of extended foreign deployments. Services include crisis intervention, financial management advice, relocation assistance, spouse employment assistance, parenting education and deployment support programs. As a result of the Family Readiness Program, National Guard units increase their readiness and are better